

City Manager Update – 6/7/19

TGIF! This past Saturday (June 1, 2019) marked my official 5-year anniversary with the City of Smithville. It's hard to believe 1,831 days have passed since being hired as City Manager. Well, you know the old saying, "How time flies when you're having fun." We have dealt with pit bulls, golf carts, smart meters, fires, floods, horses, litigation, legislation, and a host of other issues over the past 5-years---all while trying to improve our infrastructure, reduce debt, and manage growth. The pace has not slowed since stepping into the role in 2014. However, I am pleased that we are making progress.

The 15-minute **D-Day Thunderstorm** left quite an impact on our community. This was a very unusual storm event. The 60-70 mph winds with golf-ball sized hail caused many trees to fall blocking streets and damaging power lines. All roads were cleared of fallen trees and limbs by City crews within a few hours of the incident. Initially, there were 450 utility customers impacted. However, additional outages were necessary to repair the downed power lines raising the total number of customers impacted to over 1000. Some customers experienced multiple outages. Some outages were less than 5 minutes while others lasted more than 12-hours. The Utility crew worked until 5:00 am this morning to restore power in a safe and timely manner. Although some residents sustained damage to their homes and were inconvenienced by the loss of power, we are fortunate that no one was injured. As of 3:00 PM today, power has been restored to approximately 99% of utility customers. SPECIAL THANKS to: 1) Burlin Powerline for their assistance; 2) the Smithville PD for traffic control and resident wellness checks; 3) the Smithville PD Communications Department (Dispatch) for answering hundreds of citizen calls to report outages and check on the status of power; 4) the Streets & Alleys / Leaf & Limb / Parks Departments for clearing roads; and 5) the Smithville Utility Department for their continued dedication and effort.

The rain showers we received in May and early June will soon be taking a backseat to summer heat and humidity. All City personnel working outdoors have been instructed to remain hydrated and take frequent breaks to prevent heat-related injury/illness. The hot temperature(s) combined with high humidity can elevate the heat index well above triple digits making outdoor working conditions hazardous. A cooler with ice-water and/or Gatorade is provided on each City vehicle. With the higher summer temperatures, citizens will be using more water to keep their lawns green and more electricity to keep their houses cool (present company included). This will provide additional utility revenue for the City to help us hit our budget forecast. With respect to water use, the City has a [Drought Contingency Plan](#) whereby water use restrictions will be implemented based upon triggering events. Specifically, the cumulative use of 1.5 million gallons of water (or more) for three consecutive days. I'm pleased to report that we are a long way from hitting the 1.5 million-gallon drought contingency plan action level. During the current calendar year, the peak daily water demand for the City of Smithville occurred on May 27th (Memorial Day) with 512,112 gallons used (25% less than May 2018). In comparison, the largest peak demand recorded last year occurred on Saturday, August 25, 2018 when the total city-wide daily water use was 792,930 gallons. Our current city-wide water storage capacity is approximately 1.6 million gallons.

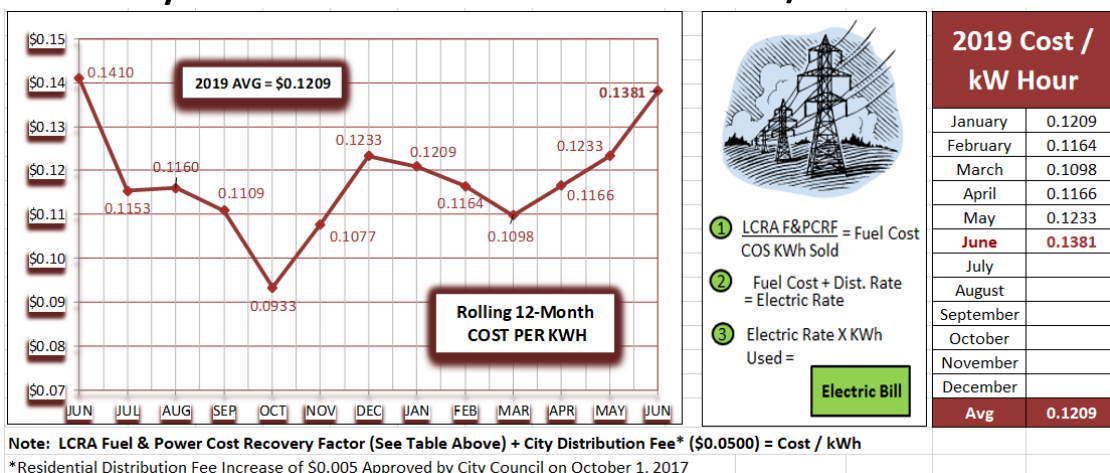
Here is a list of accomplishments, issues, and planned activities since my last update:

- 1) **Smithville ISD Annual End-of-Year Breakfast** – Representatives from the Smithville PD, Library, and City attended the annual Smithville ISD End-of-Year Breakfast on **Monday, June 3, 2019** to recognize those SISD faculty members and staff for their dedication and effort throughout the school year. The Smithville PD, Smithville Library and the City were recognized for the support we provide SISD on a continuous basis as a community / business partner. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 2) **2018 TCEQ Annual Drinking Water Quality Report** - The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) issued the 2018 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for the City of Smithville for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2018. There were no radioactive, microbial, inorganic, or organic chemical contaminants in excess of those found in naturally-occurring sources of water. The City of Smithville's drinking water received a "Superior Rating" from the TCEQ based upon the criteria listed in [Title 30, Texas Administrative Code, Subsection 290.47\(a\), Appendix A](#). However, in the report, you will also see reference made to violations from 2017 involving: 1) the City's failure to collect a 24-hour follow-up sample for total coliform when sampling identified a "questionable" or positive result; 2) failure to provide results of tap water sampling within 30-days to those residents where tap water sampling was performed; and 3) failure to properly complete a [Level 1 Assessment](#) of our water system after a questionable sample for total coliform was identified. TCEQ requirements state that we must conduct follow-up sampling within 24-hours after we identify a positive (or questionable) sample. This in turn triggered another administrative violation for failure to notify consumers about potential issues and/or violations associated with our drinking water. The violations identified were administrative in nature with no monetary penalty issued. At no time was the City's water supply compromised. Corrective actions were implemented to prevent recurrence of these types of sampling and notification errors. A copy of the 2018 Annual Drinking Water Quality report is available on the City's website → <https://www.ci.smithville.tx.us/our-community/news/2018-annual-drinking-water-quality-report/185/>.

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- 3) **City Council Workshop Scheduled** - A City Council workshop has been scheduled for **Thursday, June 27, 2019** from 4:00-6:00 pm to discuss roles and responsibilities, accomplishments, projects, and future plans. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.
- 4) **City-wide Mosquito Spraying Initiated** - The recent rains combined with warmer temperatures have created the perfect breeding ground for mosquitos. Besides being a nuisance, many citizens are concerned about the threat of [West Nile](#) and [Zika](#) viruses. In response, the City has begun spraying all roads and alley-ways twice a week in the evening hours between 9:00 pm and 3:00 am (every Tuesday and Friday). The City will be using “Evoluer 30-30” mosquito repellant which is mixed with an oil surfactant and delivered by a truck-mounted, ultra-low volume mister / sprayer. The manner and method in which the City dispenses the mosquito repellant solution complies with all regulatory requirements governing its use and does not present a significant health hazard to humans when delivered in DILUTE concentrations. However, the mixture can be toxic to fish and bees if sprayed directly in fish ponds or on blooming crops where bees are active. Note: Roads and alleys will be sprayed during the evening hours when bees are not active. Click on the following link to review the [Evoluer 30-30 Safety Data Sheet \(SDS\)](#). In the meantime, citizens can help do their part by keeping tall grass mowed and removing commonly overlooked breeding spots that can hold water that include old tires, clogged gutters, abandoned tubs or buckets. A good mosquito repellant (e.g., OFF, CUTTER, REPEL, etc.) is also advised if going outdoors in the late afternoon / evening. Cloves inserted into lime halves also does a decent job for localized mosquito control. Some people swear by rubbing dryer sheets on their arms. When all else fails --- the palm of your hand is a tried and true, guaranteed method of mosquito abatement! Click on the following link for some interesting facts about mosquitos--> <https://blog.mosquito.buzz/20-random-mosquito-facts-you-didnt-know>. Please contact City Hall at (512) 237-3282 if you have any questions.
- 5) **Residential Cost Per Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Calculated** - An analysis of LCRA billing data was conducted to determine residential cost per kilowatt hour (kWh) in June. LCRA fuel costs vary month to month and are based upon utility generation, transmission, line loss, and service fees. The LCRA fuel cost per kWh for June is \$0.0881. This represents a **20.18% INCREASE** compared to May’s fuel cost of \$0.0733. Adding the City’s distribution fee of \$0.0500 and LCRA’s \$0.0881 fuel cost, **the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during JUNE will be \$0.1381** (12% increase compared to May). Fuel costs are typically higher during the summer months and the higher temperatures will increase both consumption and demand. As such, some citizens may become angry that their bill “skyrocketed” this month. Just remember that the City only charges customers for what they use and when the electrical demand is high....so is the cost per kilowatt. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) has issued several “load-shedding” orders across Texas during the past few weeks when demand threatened to exceed capacity. Load shedding occurs when a utility electrical provider lowers or stops electricity distribution across the coverage area for a short period of time; this type of load shedding is commonly referred to as a rolling blackout. Brownouts, another type of involuntary load shedding, are caused by the power supplier lowering voltage distribution during peak usage times to balance supply and demand. Fortunately, the City of Smithville is not a large enough utility to require the partial shut-down of our power distribution system. ERCOT provides energy conservation tips → <http://ercot.com/about/conservation/> to help reduce consumption which in turn will help citizens save money. Below you will find a “rolling” 12-month residential cost per kWh and a fuel cost comparison chart. On average, the cost per kWh for electric service in Smithville is between 11-12 cents.

City of Smithville Residential Cost Per kWh / LCRA F&PCRF



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- 6) **Bastrop County Used Paint Collection Event** - The City of Smithville, in partnership with the City of Bastrop, Bastrop County, and Lee County held a used paint collection event on Saturday, June 1, 2019 at the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility located on SE 2nd and Taylor Street. If you recall, the City of Smithville partnered with Bastrop and Lee Counties last year on a grant application to CAPCOG for building an HHW collection facility and re-use center. The initial \$42k grant paid for a hazardous waste storage building, equipment, supplies, and training for staff. Since then, the facility has been expanded using. Eighty (80) vouchers were distributed in advance but only sixty-seven (67) vehicles brought used paint for FREE disposal. Approximately 30-gallons of “slightly used” paint was collected for the Re-use Center and 110-gallons of used paint containerized in bulk drums. In addition, there was 120-gallons of bulk flammables (e.g., epoxies, spray paints, solvents, paint thinners, etc.) collected. A special THANK YOU to the twenty-two (22) volunteers that helped make the event a success. The next HHW collection event is scheduled for August 3, 2019. (SEE PHOTOS)
- 7) **TDA-CDBG Water Line Upgrade Project Update** – Mercer Construction Co., Inc. began construction on a water line upgrade on MLK Blvd in February 2019. If you recall, the City received a Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) last year for city-wide water system improvements. The \$300k grant (with 15% match) was used to install a 10-inch water line (and associated improvements) from just south of the railroad tracks at Miller Street to the intersection of 4th and Lynch. The larger, looped distribution system will help increase water pressure, water flow, and fire protection on the south side of town. Previously, the largest diameter water line serving the south side was 6-inches. Installation of the 10” water line required closure of the railroad crossing between Marburger and Miller to bore beneath the tracks. The project is 90% complete despite multiple delays due to inclement weather. Road repair, easement repair, and final inspection are all that remain for project completion. The contract completion date is July 8, 2019.
- 8) **Miscellaneous Drainage Improvement Projects** - Miscellaneous drainage improvement projects continue throughout town. These are smaller drainage projects than those associated with FEMA. The latest projects completed include enlarging a drainage channel along McSweeney and Loop 230 that leads to the 7th Street detention pond and repairing a drainage inlet at NW 2nd street behind the old First State Bank building (SEE PHOTOS). The Webb Street culvert expansion project will begin in July. In the interim, City crews will continue to clear bar-ditches, culverts, and drainage inlets as part of their regular maintenance activity.
- 9) **City-wide Street Repairs and Paving Project Update** - The wet weather the past several weeks has delayed our street repair / repaving project. The roads listed below have been prepped and we are waiting for at least 5-7 days of dry weather before scheduling the repaving / resurfacing of the roads with the County. We are currently working with the Bastrop County Maintenance Department (who owns the paving equipment) to finalize / confirm the paving schedule. This project will require partial and temporary street closures with notification of area residents and business owners 24-48 hours in advance. Pot-hole repairs will continue throughout town as pot-holes are identified. Citizens can report a pot-hole using the Smithville [SEE/CLICK/FIX](#) link on the City Website or by downloading the SEE/CLICK/FIX app to their smart phones.

City-wide Street Repairs and Paving Schedule					
Street	From / To	Paving Material	Prep Completed	Road Closure	Paving Date
1st Street	Hwy 95 to Olive	Seal Coat	YES	YES	COMPLETE
2nd Avenue	Live Oak to Hickory	Chip Seal	NO	YES	June / July
4th Street	Marburger to McSweeney	Chip Seal	NO	YES	June / July
Hickory Street	200 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	June / July
McSweeney	300 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	June / July
Old Uptown Road	Old Uptown Rd to Uptown Drive	Chip Seal	NO	YES	June / July
Olive Street	Loop 230 to 1st	Seal Coat	YES	YES	COMPLETE
Shade Street	300 - 400 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	June / July
Walker Street	500 - 600 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	June / July
Webb Street	Willows to End of Street	Chip Seal	NO	YES	June / July
Whitehead	200 Block / 400 - 700 Block	Chip Seal	NO	YES	June / July

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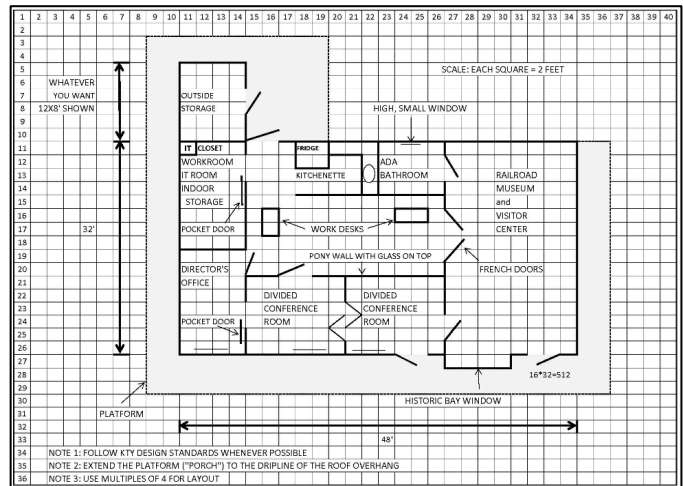
10) City Council Approves Resolution to Seek TXDOT Funding to Purchase Aircraft Hangars - On April 8, 2019, the Smithville City Council approved a resolution to request \$500k in TXDOT Aviation Non-Primary Entitlement (NPE) grant funding for the purchase of ten (10) 30'x40' aircraft hangars at the Smithville Crawford Municipal Airport. The owner(s) of the ten hangars currently have a 30-year ground lease with the City of Smithville that will expire in 2037. All active ground leases have a reversionary clause stipulating the City will assume ownership of the hangars upon termination and/or expiration of the lease. If TXDOT aviation approves the request, the use of NPE funding for the purpose of purchasing revenue-producing facilities will eliminate the Smithville Crawford Municipal Airport for state apportionment or discretionary funding consideration for the next three (3) years. An appraisal of the hangars is required to determine Fair Market Value (FMV). The estimated cost is between \$40-50k per hangar. Once FMV is determined, the City will be in a better position to negotiate a purchase price with the owner(s). If an agreed purchase price is identified, the City will proceed with the purchase of the hangars and file the necessary paperwork required by TXDOT for reimbursement on a 90/10 shared-cost basis with the understanding that the City will be responsible for 10% (or \$50k) of the total cost. The \$50k match will be covered (funded) salary savings from personnel attrition, film permit fees, RAMP grant funding, and reserves from our general fund. The City currently charges \$0.10 ft² per hangar for each of the 10 ground leases. This only brings in \$1200 per year in revenue. Hangar rentals at general aviation airports in Central Texas average \$250-300 per month. If the City can acquire (and subsequently rent) the 10 hangars for \$250 per month, this would bring in \$30-36k in revenue per year with a return on our initial \$50k investment (ROI) of 16-months. The decision regarding TXDOT approval of the City's request for NPE funding to purchase the hangars is expected on June 27, 2019.

11) Railroad Museum / Chamber of Commerce Building Project Update - Since the arsonist's fire in March, significant progress has been made regarding the relocation, layout, and funding of the new Chamber of Commerce building that will house the Visitor's Center, the Railroad Museum, and Chamber offices. A Chamber Building Committee was established in April with representation from the City, the Chamber, the Railroad Museum Board, and several community volunteers to help guide the rebuilding effort. The estimated cost of the new facility is approximately \$385k. The cost will be completely funded by insurance, grants, and donations. Several local organizations and businesses have sponsored events and given proceeds toward the Chamber rebuild effort. Per City Council approval on May 8, 2019, the new Chamber office and Railroad Museum will be located approximately 150 feet (east) from its current location to the open space between the Gazebo and the Gingerbread Man. A basic interior layout has been developed with an exterior design concept similar to the original Train Depot. Demolition of the old structure began today (SEE PHOTOS). Going forward, the City will be applying for multiple grants and getting bids for architectural services to finalize the design of the new structure. The timeline for reconstruction / building completion is estimated at 9-12 months. In the interim, the Chamber of Commerce will continue operations at their temporary location on 100 Main.

Chamber of Commerce Building / Railroad Museum Concept Drawings



Exterior Design



Interior Layout

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12) City Council Approves Variance Request for Digital Billboard on Dorothy Nichols Lane - On May 13, 2019, the Smithville City Council approved a variance request by the owner of Subway to allow placement of a 14'x48' digital billboard on his property in front of Subway at 1509 Dorothy Nichols Lane. Digital billboards are computer-controlled electronic displays that rotate ads and/or messages in a slide show fashion every 6 to 8 seconds. There are seven advertising "flips" that can be programmed. The owner of Subway offered one (1) flip to advertise city-sponsored events and/or emergency messages at NO COST as part of a development agreement the City Council considered before approving variance request. During times of emergency (e.g., Amber alerts, fires, floods, tornados etc.) all advertisements will cease and whatever information that needs to be communicated to alert citizens and/or the general public will take precedence. The digital billboard will automatically adjust to ambient light conditions and ensures the brightness of each display does not exceed .3 foot-candles over ambient light levels measured at a distance of 250 feet. The location for the digital billboard will be 110' from the NW property line where the existing Subway sign is now. The digital billboard will be 60' tall from top to bottom. In comparison, the digital billboard will be 5' taller than the America's Best Hotel sign just east of Subway. A TXDOT sign permit was issued to the owner of Subway which required the review and approval of the type, size, and location of the billboard. The property is zoned Highway Commercial (C3).

13) National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) Grant Program Nearing Completion - The National Endowment for the Arts grant program (that began in August of 2017) is nearing completion. This was a 50/50 grant program bringing a total of \$60,000 in federal dollars to the Smithville community. About 100 people volunteered more than 500 hours of their time (valued at over \$11,000) in creating these public art pieces – plus another 140 people who voted on the Legacy Portrait project. The "Smithville Possibilities" mural (illustrating the legacy of Smithville) was installed at the SISD DAEP on Thursday, June 6th, just ahead of the storm and did not sustain any damage due to the wind or hail. There will be a dedication of the mural on Saturday, June 8th at 11AM at Independence Park. The five other public art pieces are: "Wildflowers" by Elizabeth Sullivan (at the Recreation Center), "Steam" by Michael W. Hall (at Fire Station 2), the MLK Drive Sign by Stefanie Distefano, "Tilly and Mason" by Stephanie Shroyer at the old Food Pantry/current Community Gardens building on SW 2nd and Lee, and "Legacy Portraits" by James Culleton at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The last piece to this project is the Wayfinding Signage, which will be installed before the end of summer.

There are several events in Smithville scheduled the next few weeks:

Saturday, June 8th: MAKERS & MERCHANT'S FAIR (9am-4pm) hosted by EH Mercantile and Subway (1509 Dorothy Nichols Lane). Also, SOUNDS OF SMITHVILLE (11am– 10pm). Visit www.smithvilletx.org for a schedule of these FREE live music events.

Saturday, June 8th: "SMITHVILLE POSSIBILITIES" - NEA MURAL CELEBRATION (11:00 am) at Independence Park.

Monday, June 10th: CITY COUNCIL MEETING (6-7:30pm) at City Hall (317 Main Street).

Tuesday, June 12th: CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COFFEE CHAT (7:30-8:30am) at Olde World Bakery (112 Main Street). An Economic Development Committee update will be provided by April Daniels and Jill Strube. In addition, an update of the Chamber Office / Visitor's Center / Railroad Museum rebuild project will be provided.

Saturday, June 15th: MAKERS & MERCHANT'S FAIR (9am-4pm) hosted by EH Mercantile and Subway (1509 Dorothy Nichols Lane).

Saturday, June 15th: JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION at MLK PARK (10am-10pm). Parade, activities for kids, FREE food, and music for the community. For more information, call (512) 360-7381.

Saturday, June 15th: DINNER ON THE GROUNDS FUNDRAISER (6:00 pm) at the historic Hill House (401 Main). All proceeds will be donated to help defray the cost of rebuilding the Smithville Railroad Museum, Visitors Center, and Chamber of Commerce offices. Visit www.smithvilletx.org for details.

Thursday, June 20th: CHAMBER MIXER (5-7:00pm) at Olde World Bakery.

Thursday, June 27th: CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP (4-6:00 pm) at City Hall (317 Main). The purpose of the workshop is to discuss roles and responsibilities, accomplishments, projects, and future plans. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

PHOTOS (6/7/19):

SISD End-of-Year Breakfast



Drainage Improvement NW 2nd



Chamber / RR Museum Demo



Drainage Improvement Project on McSweeney & Loop 230 (east)



NEA Mural on SISD DEAP Building



HHW Paint Collection Event



PHOTOS (6/7/19):

D-Day Thunderstorm - Smithville, TX - June 6, 2019



SPECIAL THANKS
TO THE SMITHVILLE PD AND ALL CITY CREWS AND
PERSONNEL FOR YOUR SUPPORT!